

Power Wheelchair Coding Initiative

The Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) is a standard coding system for describing the specific items and services provided in the delivery of health care. The technology, range of products, and market for power wheelchairs have changed substantially since the current HCPCS codes for power wheelchairs were added in late 1993. Currently, most power wheelchairs are billed under a single code (K0011), for which Medicare has set a single ceiling payment amount which does not accurately reflect the different levels of mobility technology that is now on the market.

CMS, working in conjunction with the Statistical Analysis Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (SADMERC) and DMERCs, and taking into consideration comments received on draft power wheelchair codes released in the fall of 2004, have developed a new set of power wheelchair codes. CMS has revised the power wheelchair codes to more accurately reflect the products that are on the market today to ensure that our beneficiaries receive the product most appropriate for their conditions. This is in line with recommendations made by the industry and the OIG that CMS expand the codes for power wheelchairs to better define the products to meet the needs of the Medicare beneficiaries. The new codes and additional information are located in the following PDF file: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/suppliers/dmepos/PWCcodesFinal2.pdf>

In developing these new codes, CMS hosted a public meeting on power wheelchair codes on September 1, 2004. Based on input from that meeting, the codes were revised to more accurately describe the wheelchairs currently on the market. Part of the requirements for the new codes will include “testing standards” in several areas (i.e., weight capacity, fatigue testing, speed and range testing). After a substantial period to enable power wheelchair manufacturers to come into compliance with the new requirements, these new codes will go into effect on January 1, 2006. Accurate individual payment ceilings would also be developed for each of the new codes. Additional details regarding the timeframes for testing and coding verification will be posted on this page in the next few weeks.